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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorneys General Call for Dramatic Measures to Fight Methamphetamine *Demand restrictions on sales of over-the-counter cold remedies*

(Phoenix, Ariz. – February 24, 2005) Ten Attorneys General and officials from 13 other states came together today to attack what they called the biggest illegal drug menace in America: the use and production of methamphetamine. Heading their calls for action, they recommend making pills containing pseudoephedrine, the drug essential to producing meth, harder to obtain by placing them behind pharmacy counters and requiring buyers to show IDs and sign a log to get them.

The Attorneys General, as the chief law enforcement officers of their states, share a deep concern for the public health and safety crisis caused by meth and a commitment to work together to combat its spread. The meth summit marked the first time the Conference of Western Attorneys General has convened a special meeting to take on a drug issue.

The Attorneys General said meth is closely connected to a wide range of other crimes, including domestic abuse, child endangerment and identity theft. This highly addictive stimulant is destroying lives every day. Clandestine meth labs make neighborhoods unsafe, harm children and impose high costs on taxpayers, businesses, healthcare systems and the environment. The costs to society associated with a single neighborhood meth lab have been estimated at more than \$300,000.

The Attorneys General, along with national experts on the meth epidemic, discussed their experiences and best practices to fight this scourge. Their deliberations helped forge consensus on substantial steps to address the devastating impact of meth.

The Attorneys General recommend states take the following actions:

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- Pursue a comprehensive, aggressive approach that addresses prevention through education, vigorous law enforcement and treatment of meth addiction.
- Make pills containing pseudoephedrine, the drug essential to producing meth, harder to obtain by placing them behind pharmacy counters and requiring buyers to show IDs and sign a log to get them. An Oklahoma law imposing such restrictions has produced tremendously positive results, including an 80 percent reduction in meth lab seizures. This is the single, most effective step a state can take to fight meth. Legislation to accomplish this has been introduced in 27 states. Most of these proposed laws would limit the purchase of pseudoephedrine to 9 grams (about 300 tablets) within a 30-day period.
- Do everything possible to protect children, who are often innocent victims of meth use and production. This includes updating laws governing child abuse by meth users. The law should specify that cooking meth around kids is child abuse, plain and simple.
- Step up efforts to intercept meth supplies coming from Mexico and so-called "super labs." Once the number of small meth labs within each state has been reduced, more law enforcement resources can be directed toward cutting off these outside sources of meth.
- Work with our federal partners, both in terms of new legislation and additional financial support for law enforcement.
- Mount a broad-based, grass roots prevention campaign to inform both adults and children on the dangers of meth use. In this campaign, the AGs will build coalitions with other law enforcement agencies and community organizations, including schools, Boys and Girls Clubs, service clubs, pediatricians and behavioral health professionals.

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